

LAKE REGION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Policy: Certification - Support System  
Adopted: August 2, 1999

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Summary: This rule establishes the requirements for M.S.A.D. #61 support systems, required by 20-A M.R.S.A. #13011 et seq to operate as part of the certification process for teachers.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Rule

This rule establishes the standards and procedures which govern the operation of M.S.A.D. #61 Support Systems which are part of the State certification process for teachers. The rule includes the procedural prerequisites to an approved support system and the substantive standards for operation of the system and support and assessment of teachers and educational specialists.

1.2 Applicability

The requirements of this chapter shall apply to classroom teachers and educational specialists as defined below:

1.3 Definitions

- a) Approved Study - Credit hours of academic study or professional education in an accredited institution of higher education in the field for which the teacher holds an endorsement, or in a related subject area, or an area in which one is seeking an endorsement; credit hours in an in-service training program approved by the Support System which is designed to improve the performance of the teacher in the field for which the teacher holds an endorsement, or in a related subject area, or an area in which one is seeking an endorsement; and an individual professional development plan.
- b) Commissioner - Commissioner of Educational and Cultural Services or a designee.
- c) Classroom teacher - Certified classroom teacher acting within the scope of their certificate: elementary teacher, secondary teacher, middle school and junior high teacher, special subject teacher, vocational trade teacher, special education teacher. For the purposes of certification, an M.S.A.D. #61 employee who is not acting within the scope of the certificate may enter the process for recertification meeting all normal requirements.
- d) Educational specialist - guidance counselors, elementary guidance consultants, library-media specialists, school librarians, special education consultants, speech and language clinicians, reading specialists, school nurses, school psychologists, school psychological evaluators.

- e) School Board - M.S.A.D. #61 Board of Directors.
- f) School administrative unit or school unit shall be M.S.A.D. #61 and Lake Region Vocational Technical Center.
- g) Support system - A local mechanism for assisting classroom teachers and educational specialists to meet the requirements of Chapter 502. It will be comprised of a governance committee which includes a majority of teachers.
- h) Support team - At least two professional level teachers, administrators, educational specialists and other educators from inside and outside the school unit who are responsible for assisting Conditional certificate holders, Provisional certificate holders, professional certificate holders seeking the master level, and Master level people seeking renewal.
- i) Action Plan - a plan developed collaboratively with the support team to meet certification requirements.

#### 1.4 Purpose, Role of Support Systems

A support system has several functions and roles to assist and encourage good teaching in M.S.A.D. #61.

- a) To provide strong support services in order to facilitate good teaching and classroom management skills among teachers with Conditional and Provisional certificates;
- b) To provide assistance and support services, if requested, to all persons who are candidates for higher level teacher certificates;
- c) To provide the Commissioner with certification recommendations for teacher and/or educational specialist candidates seeking Conditional certification, Conditional renewal, Professional certification, Professional renewal, Master certification, and Master level renewal;
- d) To review and approve Teacher or Educational Specialist Preliminary Action Plans for Conditional certificate holders, Provisional certificate holders, holders of transitional endorsements (optional), Professional certificate holders seeking the Master level, and Master certificate holders seeking renewal prior to the implementation of the plan and upon completion of the plan;

- e) To review and approve Professional or Conditional Renewal Plans for approved study for Professional certificate holders, teachers or educational specialists, prior to the implementation of the renewal plan and upon completion of the plan;
- f) To provide the Commissioner with recommendations as to the issuance and renewal of transitional endorsements and the conversion of transitional endorsements to full endorsements;

1.5 General Requirements

- a) M.S.A.D. #61 shall submit a plan for State DECS approval and shall submit any changes after initial approval.

2. SUPPORT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Preparation of Support System Plan

M.S.A.D. #61's Recertification Committee shall draft and revise a certification plan.

2.2 Components of a Support System Plan

- a) M.S.A.D. #61
- b) Management of the Support System - Support System Steering Committee (SSSC)

I. Composition Suggested

- A. At least one teacher from each building. If no one from a given building is able to serve, the committee shall appoint a teacher to complete the committee.
- B. 1 special services teacher
- C. 1 itinerant teacher
- D. 1 vocational school teacher
- E. 1 Lake Region Teacher Association member
- F. 1 administrator
- G. From the members, a Chairperson will be elected.

II. Responsibilities

- A. Committee
  - 1. Ensures assignment of support teams/mentors
  - 2. Gives final approval for Preliminary Action Plans

3. Develops orientation programs for new staff members
4. Provides technical assistance
5. Maintains certification updates in each building
6. Recommends resources for support team training
7. Provides project evaluation by meeting at least quarterly to evaluate progress of Preliminary Action Plans, and the support system as a whole.
8. Develops informational packets for all teachers regarding the certification process.
9. Provides the Commissioner with certification recommendations for candidates seeking any type of certification as described herein.

B. Officers

1. Chairperson

- a. Schedules meetings
- b. Communicates with school committees, superintendent, and administrators
- c. Ensures efficient operation of the Certification Process
- d. Oversees preparation and management of the budget for the certification process

2. Resource Person

- a. Keeps an updated, file cabinet of courses, workshops, resource people, and materials which can be used by any teacher applicant/support team member to achieve Preliminary Action Plan goals.

- c) M.S.A.D. #61 will provide orientation meetings for all Provisional level and conditional level teachers as well as teachers seeking their Master level certificates at the beginning of each school year.
  - 1) Initially, all teachers will be invited to discuss the new certification process.
  - 2) Information packets will be distributed that clearly state the necessary steps required and outline methods suggested for achieving desired certification.

- 3) Packet will include:
  - a) M.S.A.D. #61's Support System Steering Committee's composition and responsibilities.
  - b) Teacher Support Team's description, assignment, function, and responsibilities.
  - d) Preliminary Action Plan examples with time line, involvement of the support team, and the Steering Committee's decision process.
  - d) Certification updates will be in each building.
- d) The M.S.A.D. #61 SSSC will be appointed and/or elected in May when replacements are needed.
  - 1) Members will be elected in groups where there are numerous candidates available.
  - 1) At a OC September school board meeting, an update on certification in the District will be given.
  - 3) Appointments will be consistent with 2.4 and 2.5.
- e) M.S.A.D. #61 Support Teams for teachers and educational specialists will be assigned as follows:
  - 1) The Superintendent's office will provide certificate status of all staff to the SSSC and to individual staff members each September or at the time of employment.
  - 2) Personnel will be qualified to be on a support team after the completion of special requirements approved by the SSSC.
  - 3) A list of teachers qualified to serve on the support team will be available to all teachers on any level. The candidate may also elect a support team member outside of the school district if that member meets the requirements of a District support team member.
  - 4) The teacher may select one member of the support team. Other members will be agreed upon by the candidate and SSSC.
- f) Each teacher or educational specialist candidate at the Conditional or Provisional level to Professional level, the Professional level to Master level and renewal of Master level will participate with their support team in the development of a Preliminary Action Plan. The plan may consist of a comprehensive needs assessment which addresses the candidate's strengths and weaknesses.
- g) The Support Team and candidate may work with the SSSC to identify and/or deliver services and technical assistance needed for carrying out the Preliminary Action Plan.
- h) The resource person will keep on file a cumulative portfolio containing the teacher's or educational specialist's action plan and official documentation of performance.

- i) The teacher's or educational specialist's action plan will be developed collaboratively by the teacher/applicant and the support team.
- j) Any persons who are not school employees who have been asked to be on Support Teams must follow the same procedures as described in 2.7 e. unless those persons are already qualified to serve on a support team in their own districts or places of employment.
- k) Questionnaires will be given to candidates, support team members, and administrators throughout the process. One final evaluation given upon completion will be used to evaluate the support system program. Recommendations for change will be discussed and acted on by the committee.
- l) The Recertification Committee will provide resources to train support team members in peer observation and assessment techniques. Funds for additional course work will also be available.
- m) The adoption of the Support System Plan will be recorded in the minutes of the School Board.

#### 2.3 Approval, Amendment, and Evaluation

- a) If the M.S.A.D. #61 Support System Plan is not approved, the Committee will convene to consider and implement specified changes by the date specified by the Commissioner.
- b) Amendments to the approved plan may be made at any time and must be submitted in writing to the Commissioner for approval.
- c) The Support System Plan will be evaluated after five years and at five year intervals thereafter.
- d) The application for renewal of the Support System Plan will be submitted to the DECS for approval with the local unit's School Improvement Plan update.

#### 2.4 Composition of the Support System

- a) The SSSC's total membership shall include one representative from each school
- b) One member is an administrator as provided for in 2.2 b.
- c) The SSSC may consult with the employees of M.S.A.D. #61 or other consultants as needed.
- d) Members must have at least three years of experience as educators. Teacher members must hold a Professional or Master level certificate or a 5 or 10 year certificate under previous state rules.
- e) Members may not be active applicants for initial Professional level certification.

2.5 Appointment of Support System Members

- a) The Recertification Committee shall actively invite suggestions for Support System Steering Committee members from among the faculty and staff.

2.6 Purpose Role of Support Teams

In M.S.A.D. #61 the Support Team will provide:

- a) evaluation of proposed Preliminary Action Plan and recommendations for amending before presentation to the SSSC.
- b) services in order to facilitate good teaching and classroom management skills among teachers and educational specialists with Conditional certificates, Provisional certificates, Professional certificates seeking the Master level and Master level certificate holders seeking renewal.

2.7 Composition of the Support Team

- a) At least one member of the support team shall be a professional level classroom teacher.
- b) One or more of the three members of a support team may be a holder of a Master Teacher Certificate if available to the school unit.
- c) One of the three members of a support team may be an administrator for Conditional certificate holders, Provisional Certificate holders, initial Master level candidates, and candidates seeking renewal of the Master level. An administrator with evaluation responsibilities over the candidate may serve on that candidates support team only upon request of the candidate and mutual agreement between the administrator and the candidate.
- d) One of the three members of a support team may be a consultant from outside M.S.A.D. #61 who qualifies by virtue of his/her experience or special expertise in the teaching-learning and evaluation process. Employees of DECS may assist support teams in orientation and training but may not be members of any team except in unusual circumstances as determined by the commissioner.

- e) Member of a support team must have the following qualifications:
  - 1) at least three years experience as an educator
  - 2) at least a Professional level certificate issued under Chapter 115-A or a 5 or 10 year certificate issued under the old law.
  - 3) successful completion of a peer-coaching course is desirable.
  - 4) exceptions to 2.7, e, 1, 2, or 3 shall be presented to the SSSC for approval or denial.
- f) None of the members of a support team may be active applicants for Professional level certification.
- g) Support Team roles
  - 1) There will be at least two members on each support team.
  - 2) A team member may have more than one function.
  - 3) Team leader will arrange meetings of the team and candidate, report progress of the Preliminary Action Plan to the SSSC and make sure that a time line is followed.
  - 4) A Record Keeper record the action plan, record the observations made by the team, record the candidate's progress, and keep a summary record of any meetings.
  - 5) An Advisor/Mentor will make many resources available and help advise the candidate on courses of action.
  - 6) The Team Leader and Record Keeper should be separate.
  - 7) When a support team member has finished all of the duties involved with the completion of a Preliminary Action Plan, the support team member may choose to resign by presenting in writing his/her resignation to the SSSC.

## 2.8 Appointment of Support Team Members

- a) The SSSC shall actively invite suggestions for Support Team members from among the faculty and staff.
- b) The SSSC will make recommendations to the M.S.A.D. #61 Superintendent who will then submit nominations to the School Board for approval.
- c) The Support Team members will be assigned to the candidate by the SSSC according to 2.2 e.



## 2.9 Teacher Preliminary Action Plan

- a) The Preliminary Action Plan will specify the goals to be worked on by the candidate, teacher or educational specialist, consistent with the appropriate certificate level. The Preliminary Action Plan will identify skills which need improvement and will specify particular routes of improvement. The Preliminary Action Plan will specify how success in meeting those goals will be measured, specify professional development resources to be provided by the support team, provide a work plan, and describe the assessment process as per the "Standards for Professional Growth." (Listed on Page 11)
- b) For Conditional and Provisional certificate holders, each teacher or educational specialist action plan will also include no fewer than three classroom observations annually by the assigned support team for two years. The First observation will be for at least one period of instructional activity, preceded and followed by a conference with the teacher. All observations will be done by persons trained in peer observation techniques.
- c) The purpose of the plan is to provide professional support and guidance to teachers and educational specialists seeking a higher level of certification and renewal of the Master level certificate.

## 3. RECORDS AND REPORTS

### 3.1 Employee Records

An M.S.A.D. #61 employee's Preliminary Action Plan and formal recommendation shall be considered employee records within the meaning of 20-A M.R.S.A. 6101 and 6102. These shall be accessible to the teacher or educational specialist, and to any person designated by the candidate.

### 3.2 Recommendation to Commissioner

- a) Final recommendation of the M.S.A.D. #61 Support System regarding a teacher's eligibility for certification shall be submitted to DECS in the Commissioner's required format.
- b) Recommendations for renewal of Professional Certificate may be submitted at any time.
- c) Recommendations for the initial Professional Certificates must be submitted by June 1 of the year the Provisional or Conditional Certificate expires.

### 3.3 Teacher Certification Records

- a) M.S.A.D. #61 shall make available to the Commissioner at any time a teacher's Preliminary Action Plan, support system documents and all reports pertaining to the candidate.
- b) All M.S.A.D. #61 personnel records pertaining to a certification candidate will be available to the Commissioner according to 20-A M.R.S.A. 6101(3).

## 4. INITIAL PROFESSIONAL TEACHER CERTIFICATE

### 4.1 Support System Recommendation

Using the standards for professional growth leading to competency in Chapter 118-A, 4.2, the support system shall make a recommendation to the M.S.A.D. #61 Superintendent who in turn shall recommend to the Commissioner regarding the eligibility of the candidate for issuance of an initial Professional Teacher certificate. The recommendation shall be one of the following:

- a) Recommendation that the initial Professional Certificate be issued; if the candidate has satisfied the requirements and no evidence is shown for denial.
- b) Recommendation that the initial Professional Certificate be denied; if the candidate has not satisfied the requirements or there is other evidence for denial, this shall be the recommendation. If the Commissioner is satisfied that the recommendation is correct and that the correct procedures were followed, the Professional Certificate shall be denied. This denial shall be deemed tentative for purposes of Chapter 119.
- c) Recommendation that the Provisional Certificate be extended; if the M.S.A.D. #61 Superintendent makes a similar recommendation, the Provisional Certificate shall be extended for up to two years. If the Superintendent and support system recommendations do not agree, the Commissioner may hold a fact-finding hearing in M.S.A.D. #61.

### 4.2 Standards for Professional Growth Leading to Competency

The following standards for (enumerated further in 115A) professional growth leading to competency shall be the basis upon which the action plan is drafted, observations and assessments are made, and recommendations are adopted for purposes of Professional level certification:

- a) Subject Matter Knowledge - The competent teacher is knowledgeable in the subject or subject field proposed for certification.
- b) Communication/Language Skill - The competent teacher communicates in clear, understandable and appropriate language with students and peers.

- c) Curriculum Planning - The competent teacher designs instruction to facilitate learning consistent with the needs and interests of students.
- d) Classroom Instruction and Management - The competent teacher delivers instruction effectively consistent with the needs and interests of students while maintaining a sense of order and purpose in the classroom.
- e) Assessment of Students - The competent teacher monitors the results of various assessment procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.
- f) Professional Characteristics - The competent teacher is equitable, sensitive, and responsible to all students and staff.

## 5. RENEWED PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE

### 5.1 Steps to Seek Professional Certification Renewal

The candidate for renewal of a Professional Certificate should develop a Preliminary Action Plan. This plan should be submitted to the SSSC immediately following certification renewal. The plan will describe the activities the candidate will carry out to acquire the equivalent of a minimum of six credits of approved study. If the plan is approved, the candidate will notify the SSSC of any amendments by submitting an updated plan.

All amendments are subject to SSSC approval. A modified plan will be approved or rejected. If approved, the candidate will follow steps outlined for approved plans. A rejected plan may be revised and resubmitted on a monthly basis.

### 5.2 Support System Recommendations

Documentation of completion of activities in an approved plan should be submitted by April 1 of the year of expiration of certification. Persons unable to submit documentation by this date should notify the SSSC of progress on their plan by this date. Acceptable documentation for courses will be considered a grade of C or better in graded courses or P in a pass/fail course. Other requirements will be as defined in the Preliminary Action Plan.

A recommendation for non-renewal will be made to the Commissioner if:

- a) the candidate fails to develop a Preliminary Action Plan
- b) the candidate fails to submit acceptable documentation of completed activities as listed in the approved Preliminary Action Plan.
- c) Other evidence shows a proper basis for denial of certification.

The negative recommendation may be appealed as listed in Chapter 119 of MDECS rules.

A recommendation will be made that the Professional Teacher certification be renewed upon acceptable documentation of completion of activities as listed in the approved Preliminary Action Plan, unless other evidence shows a proper basis of denial.

## 6. INITIAL MASTER TEACHER CERTIFICATE

### 6.1 Steps to Seek Initial Master Teacher Certification

The candidate for initial master teacher certification will:

- a) notify the SSSC of his/her intent to become a master teacher at any time during the school year.
- b) be assisted by the support team, using evaluation procedures, to assess skills using the standards for professional growth leading to competency.
- c) with the help of a support team, develop a Preliminary Action Plan:
  - 1) defines steps to be taken to demonstrate exemplary skills in all aspects of classroom teaching listed in Chapter 118A, 4.2.
  - 2) defines steps to be taken to demonstrate exceptional contributions to the teaching profession as defined in Chapter 119A, 6.2 b.
  - 3) includes at least six classroom observations by members of the support team. The first observation must be at least one instructional period and must be preceded and followed by a conference with the teacher.
  - 4) includes a professional portfolio that contains documentation of exemplary skills in all areas of classroom teaching, documentation of outstanding contributions to the profession in one or more of the areas listed, the Preliminary Action Plan, and documentation of activities that are completed.

- 5) includes the equivalent of an additional six credits of approved study to renew the Professional level certificate if it would expire during the Preliminary Action Plan.
  - 6) will include activities that will acquire the equivalent of a minimum of six credits of approved study. (A list of some suggested activities and clock hour conversions will be in the packet.) Courses taken must be graduate level.
- f) If the plan is approved, the candidate will notify the SSSC of any amendments by submitting an updated Preliminary Action Plan. All amendments are subject to SSSC approval. A modified plan will be approved or rejected. If approved, the candidate will follow steps outlined for approved plans. A rejected plan may be revised and resubmitted on a monthly basis.

#### 6.2 Support System Recommendations

Documentation of completion of activities in an approved plan should be submitted by June 1 of the year certification will be issued. Acceptable documentation for courses will be considered only if the course is a graduate level course and the grade is a B or better.

A recommendation for denial of the Master Teacher Certificate will be made if:

- a) the candidate fails to submit acceptable documentation of completed activities listed in the approved Preliminary Action Plan.
- b) other evidence shows a proper basis for denial of the Master Teacher Certificate.

A negative recommendation may be appealed as listed in Chapter 119 of MDECS rules.

A recommendation that the Master Teacher Certificate be issued will be made upon acceptable documentation of completion of activities listed in the approved Preliminary Action Plan unless other evidence shows a proper basis for denial.

## 7. RENEWED MASTER TEACHER CERTIFICATE

### 7.1 Steps to seek renewed Master Teacher Certificate

The candidate for renewed Master Teacher certification will:

- a) Notify the SSSC within one year of the reissuance of a Master Teacher certificate
- b) Same as 6.1, b.
- c) Same as 6.1, c.
- d) Same as 6.1, d.
- e) Same as 6.1, e.
- f) Same as 6.1, f.

### 7.2 Support System Recommendation

Same as 6.2

If the candidate does not wish to renew a Master Teacher Certificate, he/she may return to a Professional level certificate. This will require an approved Preliminary Action Plan.

## 8. TRANSITIONAL TO FULL ENDORSEMENT

### 8.1 Support System Proposal

The SSSC shall furnish a proposal to the Superintendent ~~who in~~ turn shall recommend to the Commissioner in connection with a Professional level teacher's application for a transitional endorsement. The proposal shall contain a timetable, expressed in one year increments for the teacher to meet the criteria of the Chapter relating to substantive academic preparation for that endorsement. In no event shall the timetable extend beyond five years in duration.

## 9. EDUCATIONAL SPECIALISTS

9.1 The requirements for a Preliminary Action Plan will be the same as for teachers according to the level sought.

9.2 Recommendations for issuance or denial of certification will be according to the level sought.



## NOTICE TO ALL 1999 RECERTIFICATION CANDIDATES

You are to send your state application to the State yourself. We suggest that you send it return receipt requested. You then have evidence that you sent the document.

Once you receive your certification certificate from the State, you must send a copy to Cathy Gerrish at the superintendent's office. This must be done by August 17th. If this is not done, you run the risk of not being hired for the 1999-2000 school year.